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Lim

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(54) **BATTERY MODULE**

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(71) Applicants: **SAMSUNG SDI CO., LTD.**, Yongin-si,
Gyeonggi-do (KR); **ROBERT BOSCH**
GMBH, Stuttgart (DE)

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(72) Inventor: **Young-Bin Lim**, Yongin-Si (KR)

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(73) Assignees: **Samsung SDI Co., Ltd.**, Yongin-si
(KR); **Robert Bosch GmbH**, Stuttgart
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(65) **Prior Publication Data**

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Primary Examiner — Carlos Barcena

Assistant Examiner — Wojciech Haske

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Lewis Roca Rothgerber
Christie LLP

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CPC **H01M 2/12** (2013.01); **H01M 2/1077**
(2013.01); **H01M 2/1211** (2013.01); **H01M**
2/1217 (2013.01); **H01M 2/1223** (2013.01);
H01M 2/1252 (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

None

See application file for complete search history.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A battery module including a plurality of battery cells each
having a vent; an insulating member on the battery cells, the
insulating member having a plurality of openings and a
protrusion seal extending around a periphery of each of the
openings; a pressurizing member on the insulating member,
the pressurizing member having a plurality of openings; and
a cover covering the insulating member and the pressurizing
member.

11 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets

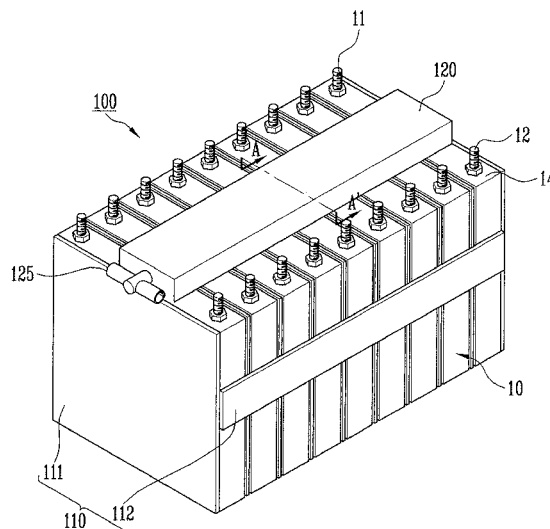


FIG. 1

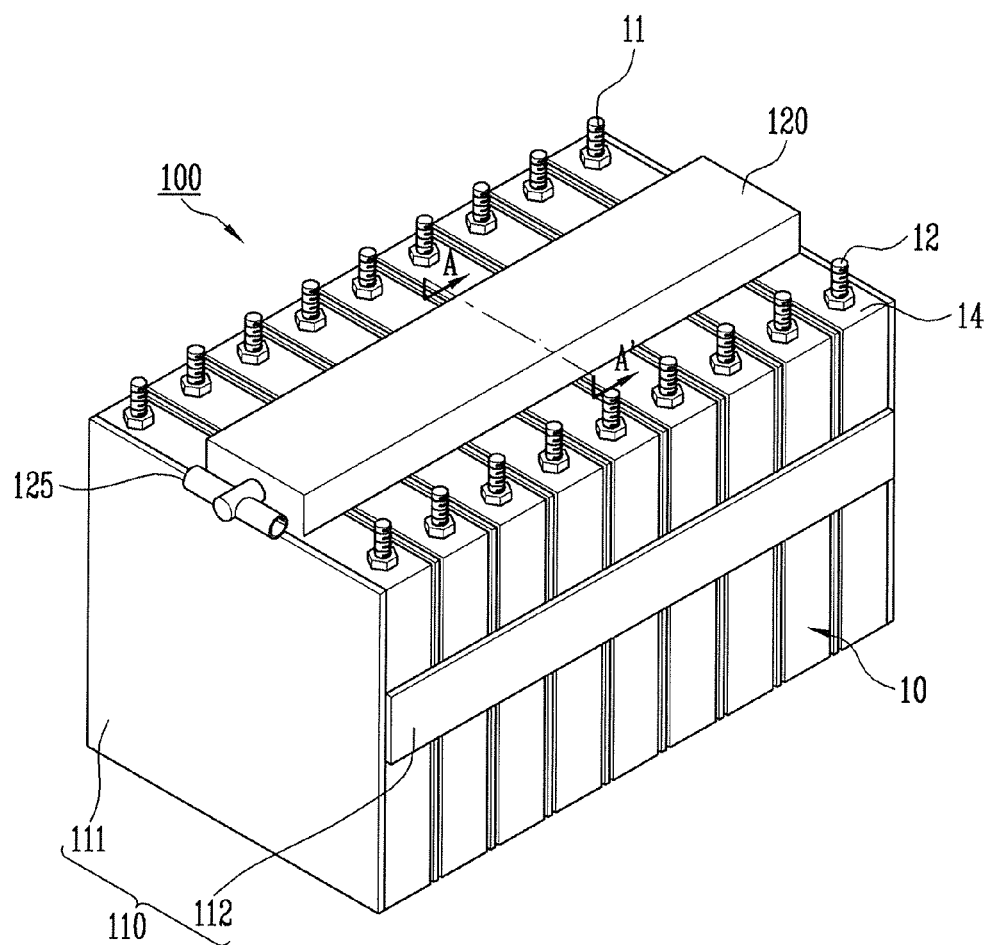


FIG. 2

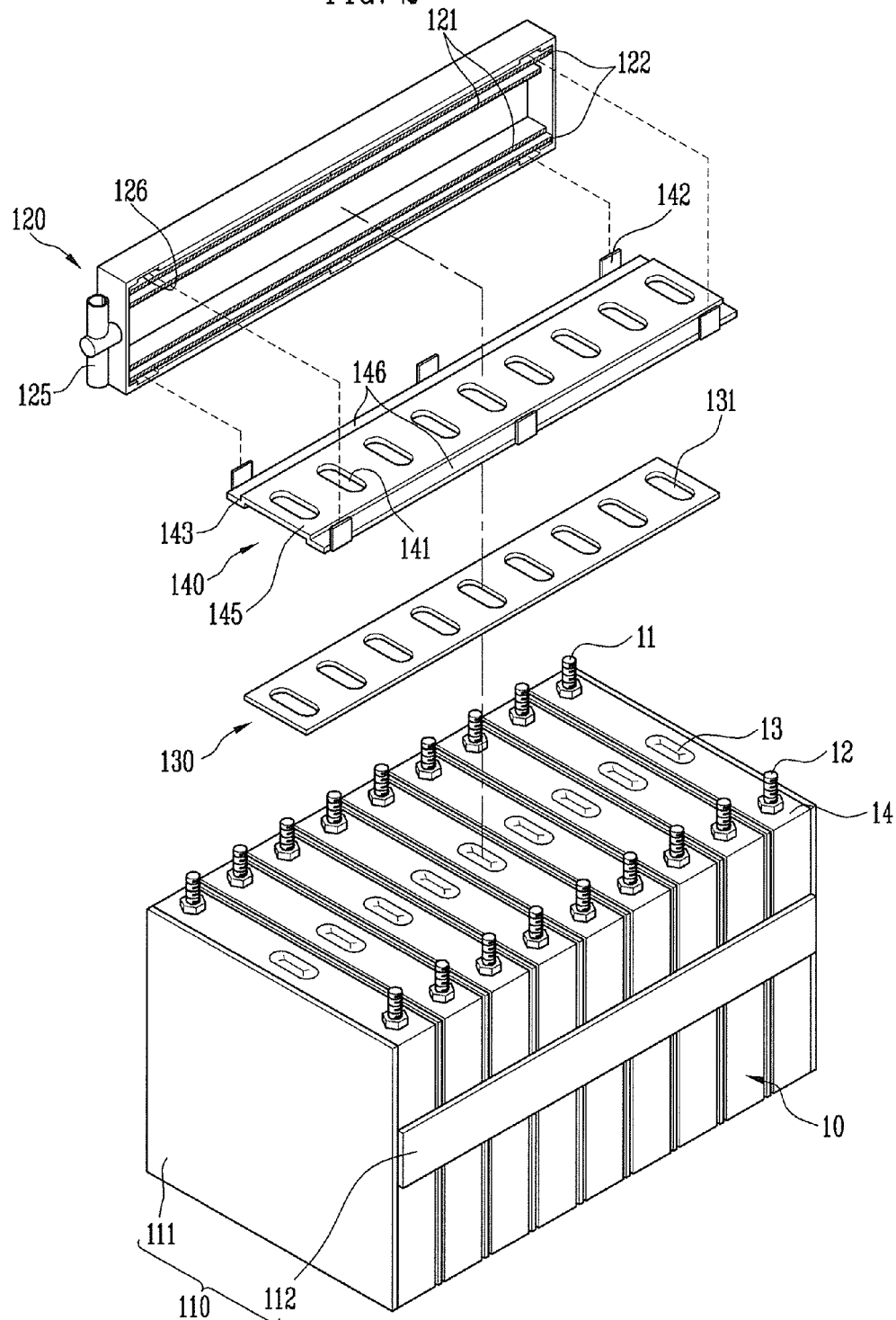


FIG. 3

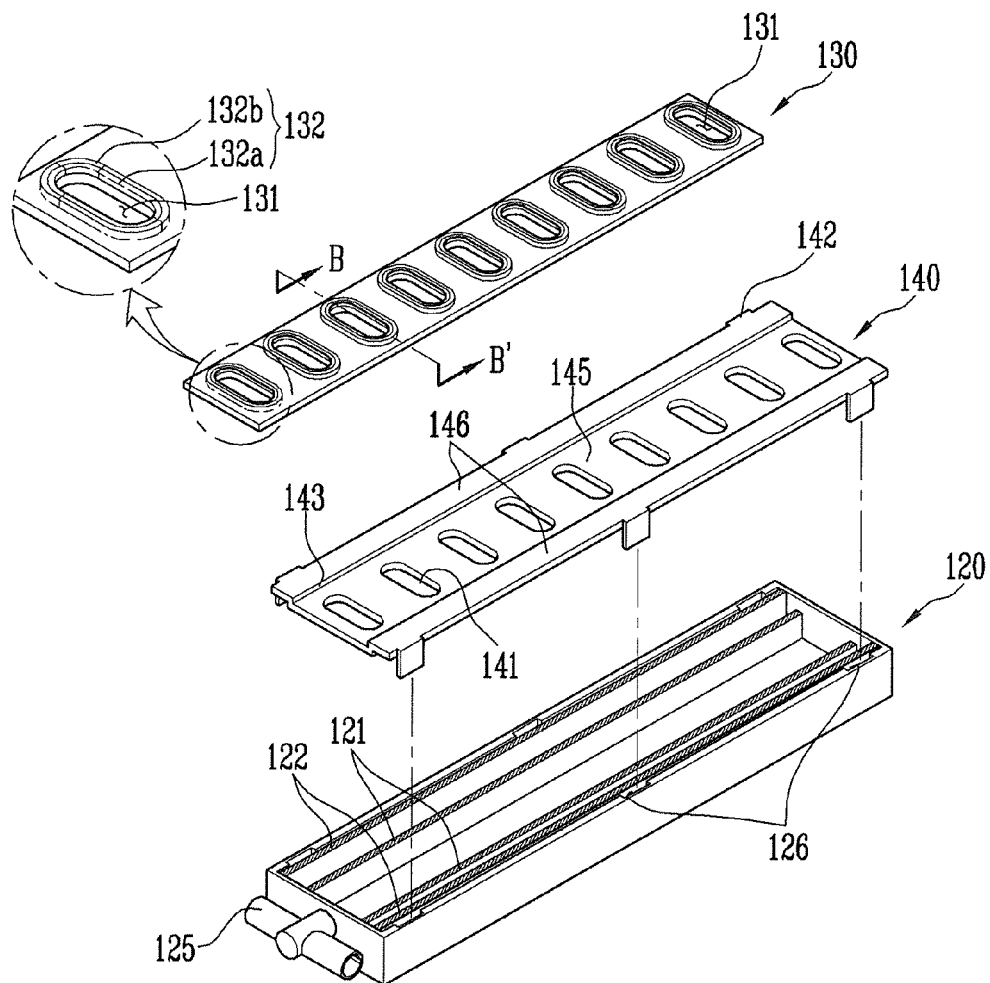


FIG. 4

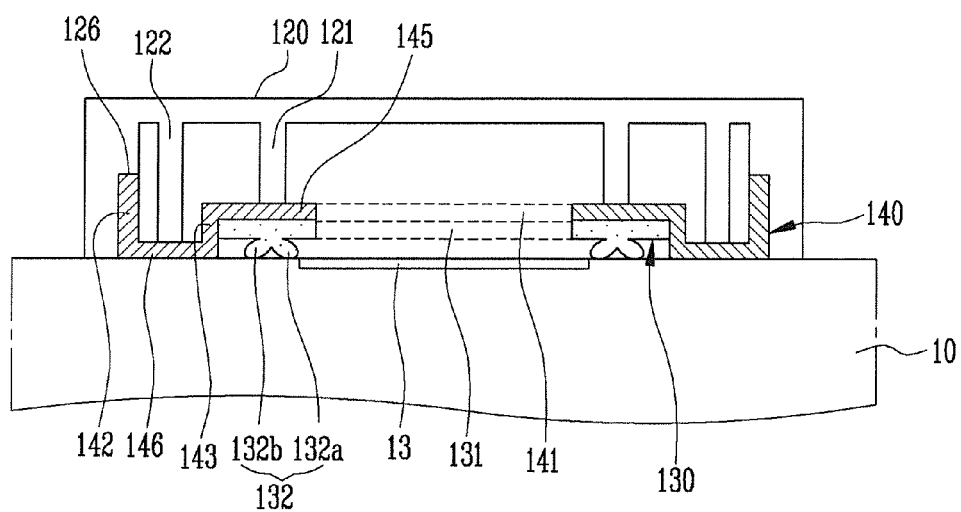


FIG. 5

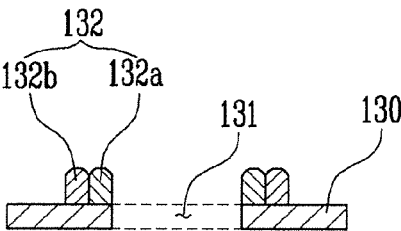
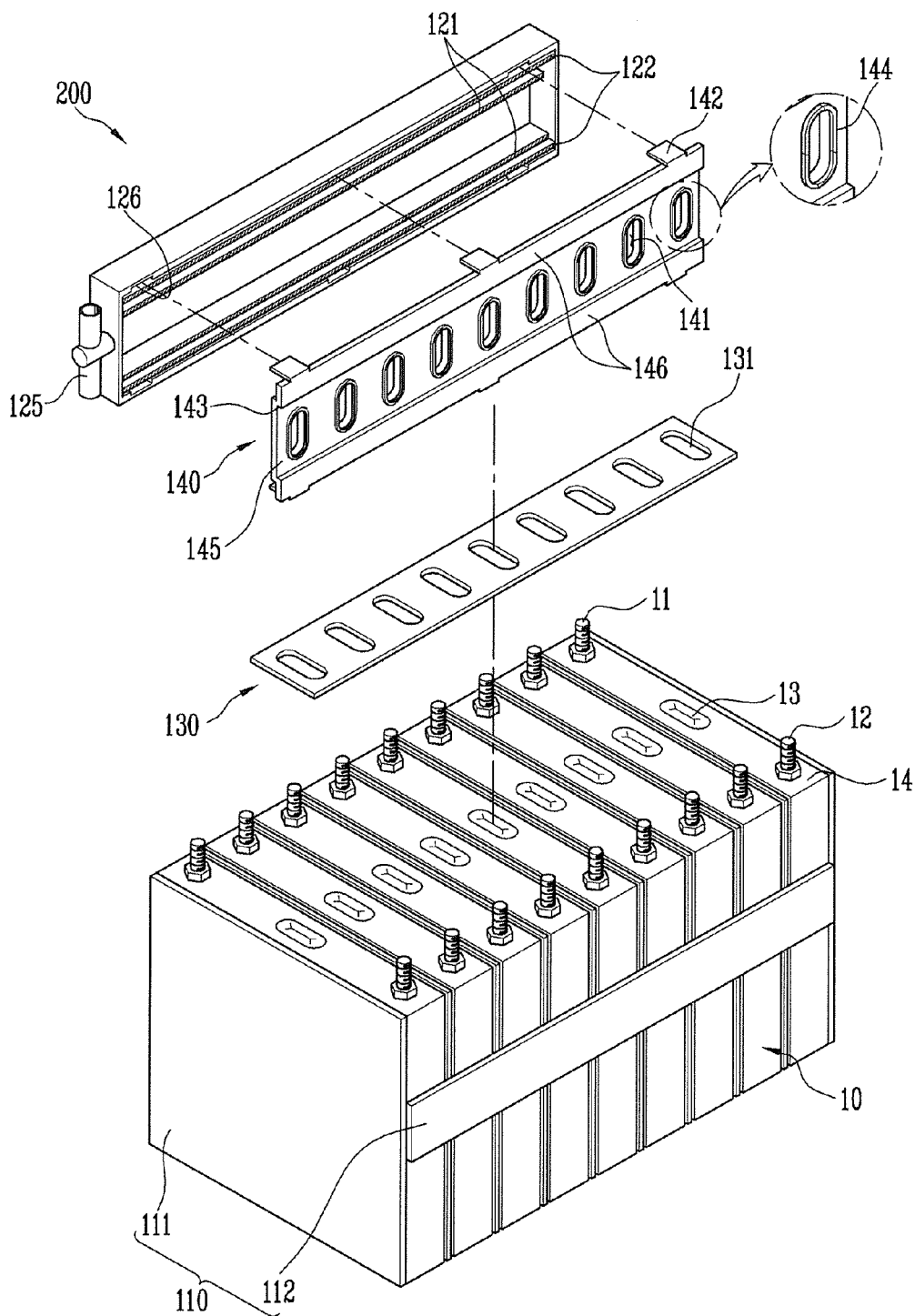


FIG. 6



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BATTERY MODULE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims priority to and the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/607,907, filed on Mar. 7, 2012, the United States Patent and Trademark Office, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND

1. Field

The present invention relates to a battery module.

2. Description of the Related Art

Recently, a high output battery module has been developed by using a non-aqueous electrolyte of high energy density, the high output battery module including a plurality of battery cells connected in series to drive a motor such as an electric vehicle and the like in which high power is necessary.

A typical battery cell includes an electrode assembly composed of a positive plate, a negative plate and electrolyte, which generates energy by a electro-chemical reaction with the pole plates and the electrolyte. In this case, gas may be generated within the battery cell by side-reaction of the electro-chemical reaction.

SUMMARY

A battery module is provided that is capable of preventing a gas leak generated from the battery cell under degassing by forming a pressurizing member between a cover covering a vent and a gasket. In one embodiment, the battery module is capable of independently sealing each vent by forming a protrusion along a circumference of a first opening member facing the vent.

In one embodiment, a battery module is provided including a plurality of battery cells each having a vent; an insulating member on the battery cells, the insulating member having a plurality of openings and a protrusion seal extending around a periphery of each of the openings; a pressurizing member on the insulating member, the pressurizing member having a plurality of openings; and a cover covering the insulating member and the pressurizing member.

In one embodiment, the protrusion seal is a double protrusion seal. The double protrusion seal of the insulating member may include a first protrusion and a second protrusion configured to be movable with respect to the first protrusion. Further, the protrusion seal may extend around a periphery of the vent of at least one of the battery cells.

In one embodiment, the pressurizing member comprises a first pressurizing member and a second pressurizing member stepped from the first pressurizing member. Additionally, the cover may have a rib structure, configured to contact the pressurizing member, wherein the rib structure includes a pair of first ribs having a first length and a pair of second ribs having a second length different from the first length. In one embodiment, the pair of first ribs contacts the first pressurizing member and wherein the pair of second ribs contacts the second pressurizing member. Further, the pressurizing member further may include a fixing protrusion extending therefrom and the cover may have a fixing groove accommodating the fixing protrusion of the pressurizing member.

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In one embodiment, the pressurizing member includes a pressurizing protrusion protruding towards the battery cells, wherein the pressurizing protrusion is generally aligned with the protrusion seal on the insulating member. In embodiments, the protrusion seal is made from a flexible material and the protrusion seal is integral as a single body with the insulating member.

In another embodiment, a battery module is provided including a plurality of battery cells each having a vent; a pressurizing member having a plurality of openings and a protrusion seal extending around a periphery of each of the openings; and a cover covering the insulating member and the pressurizing member.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view showing a battery module according to a first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is an exploded perspective view showing the battery module of FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a rear perspective view of a cover, a pressurizing member and a gasket of the battery module of FIG. 1.

FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view taken along line A-A' of FIG. 1.

FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view taken along line B-B' of FIG. 3.

FIG. 6 is an exploded perspective view showing a battery module according to a second embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 7 is a vertical perspective view showing a top of the battery module of FIG. 6.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In the following detailed description, only certain exemplary embodiments of the present invention have been shown and described, simply by way of illustration.

An embodiment of the present disclosure will be described with reference to accompanying drawings in detail.

FIG. 1 is a perspective view showing a battery module according to a first embodiment of the present invention and FIG. 2 is an exploded perspective view showing a battery module according to a first embodiment of the present invention.

Referring to FIGS. 1 and 2, a battery module according to the present invention includes a plurality of battery cells 10 forming a vent 13 for discharging gas, an insulating member 130 formed at a position generally corresponding to a vent 13 of the battery cell 10 and a cover 120 covering the vent 13 and the insulating member 130 at top thereof. In addition, a pressurizing member 140 includes between the cover 120 and the insulating member 130.

In this case, the cover 120 is a hexahedral shape, wherein one side thereof is opened, wherein the inside thereof has a space, and wherein the opened surface of the cover 120 faces the vents 13 on the top of the battery cell 10. Therefore, the space within the cover 120 may form a path capable of moving gas discharged from the vent 13 during degassing.

In addition, the insulating member 130 may be made of an elastic or flexible material such as silicon and includes a first opening 131 at a position generally corresponding to the vent 13. Such an insulating member 130 may be integrally formed to cover all of the vents 13 and a double protrusion may be formed along a circumference of the first opening 131 of a surface facing the vent 13 (see 132 in FIG. 3).

Such an insulating member **130** may be made of a heat-resistant material because the battery cell **10** generates heat in process of battery charging.

Sometimes the plurality of battery cells **10** can emit heat that melts the insulating member **130** attached to the battery cell **10**. As described above, when the insulating member is melted, gas leaks due to a reduction of a sealing capacity between the insulating member **130** and the cover **120**. Therefore, the insulating member **130** can be made of a heat-resistant material to prevent a gas leak.

In addition, the pressurizing member **140** placed on the top of the insulating member **130** includes a second opening **141** at an area generally corresponding to the first opening **131**. Such a pressurizing member **140** includes a first pressurizing member **145** along a center portion of a longitudinal direction thereof, a second pressurizing member **146** formed to step from the first pressurizing member **145** along both ends of the first pressurizing member **145** and a connector **143** connecting the first pressurizing member **145** and second pressurizing member **146**.

In one embodiment, the first pressurizing member **145** is placed above the insulating member **130** and the top of the battery cell **10** and the second pressurizing member **146** is placed above the top of the battery cell in which the insulating member is not formed. Therefore, a space surrounded by the first pressurizing member **145**, the connecting element **143**, and the vent **13** is formed by the step between the first pressurizing member **145** and the second pressurizing member **146**, and wherein the insulating member **130** may be located in the space.

In addition, both ends of the second pressurizing member have at least one fixing protrusion **142** bent vertically toward the cover **120**. Further, the fixing groove **126** is formed in the cover **120** generally corresponding to the fixing protrusion **142**. The pressurizing member **146** is firmly fixed and the insulating member **130** placed below the pressurizing member **146** can be further pressurized by inserting the fixing protrusion **142** into the fixing groove **126**. This improves a sealing of the gas flowing path formed within the cover **120**.

In addition, the cover **120** is seated on the top of the battery cell **10** so that an opened surface thereof is in communication with the vent **13**, and at least one rib **121** and **122** is formed in the inner space of the cover **120** along a longitudinal direction. Such a rib **121** and **122** includes a pair of first ribs **121** formed at position generally corresponding to the first pressurizing member **145** of the pressurizing member **140** and a pair of second ribs **122** formed at a position generally corresponding to the second pressurizing member **146** of the pressurizing member **140**. In this case, since the first pressurizing member **145** and second pressurizing member **146** are stepped, a length of the first rib **121** is shorter than a length of the second rib **122**.

One end of the cover is formed with a gas discharging port **125** connected with the outside. On degassing in a battery cell **10**, gas discharged through the vent **13** moves through the cover **120** and is discharged out of the gas discharging port **125**. In this case, the gas discharging port **125** is formed in a T-shape. Since a left side and a right side is opened, the gas does not have an effect on an adjacent battery module **100**. However, a type of the gas discharge port is not limited to the ones described herein.

Next, a battery cell and a housing will briefly described.

The battery cell **10** includes an electrode case and a cap plate **14** sealing an open area. The electrode case houses an electrode assembly having positive plate and a negative plate, and a separator located between these pole plates, and an electrolyte. A positive terminal **11** connected with the

positive plate and a negative terminal **12** connected with the negative plate, which are formed at both ends of the cap plate **14**, protrude from the electrode assembly. The positive plate and the negative plate of the electrode assembly react with the electrolyte to generate energy. The energy is transferred through the positive terminal **11** and the negative terminal **12** into the outside.

In addition, if a gas pressure generated from the inside of the battery cell **10** is above a predetermined value, the vent **13** provided between the positive terminal **11** and the negative terminal **12** of the cap plate **14** serves as a discharge path of gas from the battery cell **10**. Therefore, the vent **13** can prevent the battery cell **10** from being damaged by the internal pressure thereof. The gas can be generated as a byproduct of the pole plate and electrolyte as the battery cell **10** is charged and such a gas is discharged through the vent **13**.

An external case of the battery cell **10** is made of metal and the cover **120** is made of plastic resin. In this case, since the battery cell **10** and the cover **120** are made of heterogeneous or different materials, when the cell **10** and the cover **120** contact each other, they may not form a secure connection and a gas leak may occur in a vulnerable area. In order to prevent or minimize this, the insulating member **130** is provided between a battery pack **10** and the cover **120** to keep an area between the battery cell **10** and the cover **120** airtight.

In addition, the housing **110** includes a pair of end plates **111** provided in both ends of a plurality of battery cells **10**, a side bracket **112** connecting the side of the end plates **111** and a bottom bracket connecting the bottom of the end plates **111**.

Here, the pair of end plates **111** are formed to surface-contact the uppermost battery **10** to compress the plurality of battery cells **10**.

In addition, the side bracket **112** is connected to each of the end plates **111** to support both sides of the plurality of battery cells. Further, the bottom of the battery cell **10** is supported by the bottom bracket. As described above, the plurality of battery cells **10** are housed by a housing **110** composed of the pair end plates **111**, the side bracket **112**, and the bottom bracket.

FIG. 3 is a rear perspective view of a cover, a pressurizing member and a gasket according to a first embodiment of the present invention.

Referring to FIG. 3, an insulating member **130** is formed to generally correspond to a vent (see **13** in FIG. 2) of the top of a battery cell (see **10** in FIG. 2) according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

A pressurizing member **140** is formed below the insulating member **130** and a cover **120** is formed below the insulating member **130** and the pressurizing member **140**. The cover **120** is formed in a hexahedral shape providing a space between the cover and the battery cells, which one side thereof is opened. The opened surface of such a cover **120** is placed over the vent **13**.

In one embodiment, the insulating member **130** includes a first opening **131** at an area generally corresponding to the vent **13** and a double protrusion **132** formed along a circumference of the first opening **131** of the insulating member **140** facing the vent **13**. The double protrusion **132** includes a first protrusion **132a** formed along the circumference of the first opening **131** and a second protrusion **132b** formed along the circumference of the first protrusion **132a**. The first protrusion **132a** and the second protrusion **132b** closely contact each other in a non-pressurized state and a gap therebetween widens due to pressurization. The

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first protrusion **132a** and the second protrusion **132b** are integral with the insulating member **130** and may be made of a material of the same silicon as the insulating member **130**. Although a double protrusion has been described herein, a single protrusion may also be used within the spirit and scope of the present invention.

In addition, the pressurizing member **140** includes a second opening **141** at an area generally corresponding to the first opening **131**.

Such a pressurizing member **140** includes a first pressurizing member **145** extending along a center portion of a longitudinal direction and a second pressurizing member **146** stepped with the first pressurizing member **145** extending along both ends of the pressurizing member **145**. The first pressurizing member **145** and the second pressurizing member **146** are connected by a connector **143**. In one embodiment, a space surrounded by the first pressurizing member **145** and the connecting element **143** is formed by stepping the first pressurizing member **145** and the second pressurizing member **146**. The insulating member **130** can be accommodated in the space.

In addition, the cover **120** accommodated the insulating member **130** and the pressurizing member **140** and the space within the cover **120** can be used as a flow path through which gas is discharged from the vent **13** move during a degassing.

In addition, a least one rib **121** and **122** is formed within the space of the cover **120** along the longitudinal direction of the cover **120**. The ribs **121** and **122** include a pair of first ribs formed at position generally corresponding to the first pressurizing member **145** of the pressurizing member **140** and a pair of a ribs **122** formed at a position generally corresponding to the second pressurizing member **146** of the pressurizing member **140**.

In one embodiment, since the first pressurizing member **145** and the second pressurizing member **146** of the pressurizing member **140** are stepped, a length of the first rib **121** pressurizing the first pressurizing member **145** is shorter than a length of the second rib **122** pressurizing the second pressurizing member **146**. In one embodiment, a pair of first ribs at position generally corresponding to the first pressurizing member **145** is formed to generally correspond to a double protrusion **132** of the insulating member **130**.

Furthermore, both ends of the second pressurizing member **146** of the pressurizing member **140** have at least one fixing protrusion **142** vertically bent toward the cover **120** and the cover **120** corresponding to the fixing protrusion **142** is formed with a fixing groove **126**. This enables the fixing protrusion **142** of the pressurizing member **140** to be inserted into the fixing groove **126** of the cover **120**.

FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view taken along line A-A' of FIG. 1 and FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view taken along line B-B' of FIG. 3.

Referring to 4 and 5, the insulating member **130** is formed at a position generally corresponding to a vent **13** of a battery cell **10**.

As shown in the figures, one surface of the insulating member **130** in contact with the batter cell **10** is formed with a double protrusion **132** along a circumference of the first opening **131**. In addition, the pressurizing member **140** is formed on top of the insulating member **130**. The pressurizing member **140** includes a first pressurizing member **145** close to the top of a insulating member **130**, a second pressurizing member **146** placed in both end portions of the first pressurizing member **145** and formed to step with the first pressurizing member **145** to be closed to the top of the

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battery cell **10** and a connector **143** connecting the first pressurizing member **145** and a second pressurizing member **146**.

In addition, the insulating member **130** and the pressurizing member **140** is covered by a cover **120** having an interior space. In this case, both ends of the second pressurizing member **146** of the pressurizing member **140** formed with at least one fixing protrusion **142** vertically bent toward the cover **120**. The fixing protrusion **142** is inserted into the fixing groove **126** on the cover **120** and the pressurizing member **140** pressurizes the insulating member **130** by pressurizing the pressurizing member **140** of the cover **120**. Therefore, the double protrusion of the insulating member **130** becomes wider to more easily seal the vent.

Additionally, the top of the inside of the cover **120** facing the pressurizing member **140** is formed with at least one rib **121** and **122** along a longitudinal direction of the cover **120**. Herein, a pair of first ribs **121** located to generally correspond to the first pressurizing member **145** can pressurize the pressurizing member **140** and the insulating member **130**, and the battery cell **10**. Herein, a pair of second ribs located to generally correspond to the second pressurizing member **146** can pressurize the pressurizing member **140** and the battery cell **10**. In this case, the first rib **121** is formed to generally correspond to the double protrusion **132** of the insulating member **130** to apply a greater pressure to the double protrusion **132**.

The pressure is applied to the pressurizing member **140** by the first rib **121** and the second rib **122** formed on an inner side of the cover and such a pressure is applied to the insulating member **130** through the pressurizing member **140**. Therefore, a portion of the insulating member **130** not corresponding to the first rib **121** and the second rib **122** also can be pressurized against the top of the battery cell **10**.

The first protrusion **132a** and the second protrusion **132b** are close to each other when the pressure is not applied, whereas they separate in generally opposite directions when the pressure is applied to the first protrusion **132a** and the second protrusion **132b**. This enables the top of the battery cell **10** and the insulating member **130** to be closed. Therefore, gas discharged from the vent under a degassing may be discharged through the first opening **131**. In addition, a gap does not occur between the insulating member **130** and the pressurizing member **140** because the pressurizing member **140** is pressurized by the cover **120**. Therefore, gas discharged through the first opening **131** can be discharged through the second opening **141** into the inner space of the cover **120**, that is, through the gas flow path into the outside.

FIG. 6 is exploded perspective view of a battery module according to a second embodiment of the present invention and FIG. 7 is a vertical cross-sectional view of the top of the battery module according to a second embodiment of the present invention.

The battery module according to the second embodiment of the present invention is substantially similar to that of the first embodiment expect for the pressurizing protrusion formed in the pressurized element. Therefore, a duplicate detailed description will be omitted.

Referring to FIGS. 6 and 7, the battery module **200** according to a second embodiment of the present invention is arranged in one direction and includes a plurality of battery cells **10** having a vent **13** which discharges gas to the top thereof, an insulating member **130** formed at position generally corresponding to the vent **13** of a battery cell **10** and a cover **120** covering the vent **13** and the insulating member **130**. A pressurizing member **140** is further between the cover **120** and the insulating member **130**.

Herein, the insulating member **130** is formed with a double protrusion **132** along a circumference of the first opening **131** facing the vent **13**.

In addition, one surface of the pressurizing member **140** facing the insulating member **130** is formed with the pressurizing protrusion **144** along a circumference of the second opening **141**. In one embodiment, the pressurizing protrusion **144** is formed at a position generally corresponding to an area in which the double protrusion **132** is formed.

The pressure which the cover **10** applies to the battery cell **10** is transferred to the insulating member **130** through the pressurizing member **140**, but the area in which the pressurizing protrusion **144** is formed is subjected to a greater pressure. That is, the area having the double protrusion **132** is exposed to an intense pressure compared with other areas by the pressurizing protrusion **144** formed to correspond to the double protrusion **132** of the insulating member **130**. This enables the sealing capacity between the battery cell **10** and the insulating member **130** to prevent or reduce the likelihood of gas leaks between the battery cell **10** and the insulating member **130**.

Embodiments of the present invention prevent a gas leak generated from the battery cell to the outside by forming the pressurizing member between a cover covering a vent and the gasket which improves sealing of the gas discharge path.

In addition, each vent is independently sealed by a double protrusion along a circumference of a first opening of a gasket facing the vent to prevent a gas from leaking to the outside.

As those skilled in the art would realize, the described embodiments may be modified in various different ways, all without departing from the spirit or scope of the present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A battery module comprising:

a plurality of battery cells each having a vent;
an insulating member directly contacting the battery cells, the insulating member having a plurality of openings, each of the openings corresponding to a respective vent, and a double protrusion seal extending around a periphery of each of the openings and towards the battery cells, wherein the double protrusion seal of the insulating member comprises a first protrusion and a

second protrusion configured to be movable with respect to the first protrusion, wherein both the first and second protrusions extend toward the battery cells;

a pressurizing member directly contacting the insulating member, the pressurizing member having a plurality of openings and a fixing protrusion extending away from the battery cells; and

a cover entirely covering the insulating member and the pressurizing member, the cover having a rib structure on and contacting the pressurizing member and a fixing groove accommodating the fixing protrusion.

2. The battery module of claim 1, wherein the double protrusion seal extends around a periphery of the vent of at least one of the battery cells.

3. The battery module of claim 1, wherein the pressurizing member comprises a first pressurizing member and a second pressurizing member stepped from the first pressurizing member.

4. The battery module of claim 1, wherein the rib structure comprises a pair of first ribs having a first length and a pair of second ribs having a second length different from the first length.

5. The battery module of claim 4, wherein the pair of first ribs contacts the first pressurizing member and wherein the pair of second ribs contacts the second pressurizing member.

6. The battery module of claim 1, wherein each of the openings on the pressurizing member is generally aligned to a corresponding one of the openings on the insulation member.

7. The battery module of claim 1, wherein the pressurizing member comprises a pressurizing protrusion protruding towards the battery cells.

8. The battery module of claim 7, wherein the pressurizing protrusion is generally aligned with the protrusion seal on the insulating member.

9. The battery module of claim 1, wherein the cover defines a discharge channel through which gas exiting the vent can flow.

10. The battery module of claim 1, wherein the double protrusion seal comprises a flexible material.

11. The battery module of claim 1, wherein the protrusion seal is integral as a single body with the insulating member.

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